



**EAST
STROUDSBURG
UNIVERSITY**

COMMENCEMENT

Graduate Studies

Friday, May 8, 2026

Koehler Fieldhouse

A Member of Pennsylvania's State System of Higher Education

East Stroudsburg University Commencement

Welcome to East Stroudsburg University's Commencement celebration for our graduates. Congratulations to our students who have completed their academic programs, and to their family and friends who have supported them on this journey.

Academic Procession

An usher will lead the faculty followed by the graduating students. Candidates are placed according to the degree to be conferred, and each group is preceded by a commencement marshal. Once all are seated the grand marshal leads the platform participants and the president.

Academic Attire

The tradition of academic costume began in the medieval universities of Europe where gowns were everyday dress, providing for their wearers not only distinction but, quite possibly, warmth during long hours of study in poorly heated buildings.

Today, academic attire is seen on American campuses only at formal affairs such as commencement, Founder's Day, dedications and inaugural ceremonies. In 1895, an Academic Costume Code was established, and has since been adopted by most of our colleges and universities. When the code is followed, one can identify the degree which the wearer holds, the university that awarded it, and the course of study it represents. The distinguishing features are the cut of the gown, the length and colors of the hood, and the color of the tassel on the cap.

The bachelor's and master's gowns are generally made of plain black cotton without trim, while the gown for the doctor's degree is faced with black or colored velvet and has three bars of the same material across the sleeves. The bachelor's gown has long open sleeves, the master's gown has longer closed sleeves with arm slits at the elbow, and the doctor's gown has bell-shaped sleeves extending to the wrist.

The hoods can be distinguished by both the length and color. The bachelor's hood measures three feet, the master's, three and one-half, and the doctor's, four. The color of the velvet edging, which is wider for degrees higher than the bachelor's, indicates the subject area to which the degree pertains. In addition to the colored edging, the hood shows in its lining the official color or colors of the institution which awarded the degree. The hood is worn such that a large part of the lining is visible.

The black mortarboard cap with tassel is worn with each type of gown. Those holding the doctorate wear gold tassels, while holders of the bachelor's and master's degrees generally wear a black tassel, although in recent years it has often been customary to wear the colored tassel symbolizing, like the hood, the subject area of the wearer's degree.

In nearly every academic procession, a few costumes may be seen which do not conform to the standard patterns described above. Gold braid is frequently added to the gowns of academic administrators, and most faculties include several members who hold degrees from foreign universities, some of which prescribe very colorful attire.

The following colors are associated with the various faculties. It is mandatory that they be used on hoods and optional that they be on the tassels and the velvet used with the doctor's gowns.

Faculty.....	Color
Agriculture.....	Maize
Arts, Letters, Humanities	White
Commerce, Accountancy, Business	Drab
Dentistry	Lilac
Economics	Copper
Education.....	Light Blue
Engineering	Orange
Fine Arts, including Architecture	Brown
Forestry	Russet
Journalism	Crimson
Law	Purple
Library Science	Lemon
Medicine.....	Green
Music.....	Pink
Nursing	Apricot

Faculty.....	Color
Optometry.....	Sea Foam Green
Oratory (Speech)	Silver Gray
Pharmacy.....	Olive Green
Philosophy	Dark Blue
Physical Education	Sage Green
Podiatry-Chiropractic	Nile Green
Public Administration including Foreign Service	Peacock Blue
Public Health	Salmon Pink
Science	Golden Yellow
Social Science	Cream
Social Work.....	Citron
Theology.....	Scarlet
Veterinary Service	Gray

The Presidential Medallion

The medallion, or pectoral, has long been a symbol of the rights, authority, and power of kings and queens. At the inception of the university around the year 1000 A.D., and to this day in many European institutions, the reigning monarch still functions as the chancellor of the institution, its chief executive holding appointment as vice chancellor. With the establishment of the academy independent of the crown, the royal medallion has been retained as a symbol of the responsibilities and authority vested in the office of the president of the university by the state.



The East Stroudsburg University medallion was commissioned by the Student Activity Association in 1969, and first used by President Frank D. Sills at his inauguration. It was designed by Dr. Irene Mitchel, professor of art at East Stroudsburg University, and struck by Mr. Leslie Smith, an Allentown, Pa., craftsman. The chain of the pectoral was designed and crafted by Mr. Richard E. Phillips of East Stroudsburg, Pa.

The medallion has, on its obverse, the seal of the university. The seal is surrounded by the torch and the mace representing the light of learning and the authority of the university. These two symbols are superimposed on an abstract rendition of the Delaware Water Gap, so much a part of the geography of the region. On either side of the seal are representations of the original Stroud Hall (1893) and the current Koehler Fieldhouse (1967). Below the seal are the extended rays representing the fourteen institutions of the Pennsylvania State System of Higher Education.

The University Mace

The mace was originally a weapon of hand-to-hand combat in medieval times. With the advent of firearms, such a weapon became archaic and was adopted to symbolize the power and authority of kings and queens. Early in the history of the academy, the mace was borrowed from royalty and utilized to symbolize the authority of the institution given to it by the kings and queens and hence, the state, to grant baccalaureate and advanced degrees so specified. The mace is used at all official university functions of an academic nature.

The original East Stroudsburg University mace was commissioned by the ESU Alumni Association for the inauguration of President Frank D. Sills in 1969. It was designed and created by Mr. Richard E. Phillips, a local Pocono artisan. The redesigned mace, incorporating many features of the original mace and symbolizing the achievement of university status by East Stroudsburg State College, was commissioned by the University Commencement Committee in 1987. Mr. Phillips was again requested to modify the mace to reflect the transition from college to university, and Cherry Valley artisan Abby Porter completed the silver work. The current mace is made of cherry and is approximately 38 inches long. The mace has overlays made of hemlock, dating from 1893 from the original Stroud Hall. The black and red coloring represents the school colors.

The octagonal head of the mace represents the disciplines of the traditional academy, and four disciplines of contemporary higher education: science, arts, humanities, and philosophy. Surrounding the head are silver hands bearing the names and dates of the five precursor institutions. The handle is inset in silver with black onyx and red carnelian. The university seal crowns the mace.





Kenneth Long
President

Kenneth Long was appointed president of East Stroudsburg University of Pennsylvania by the Board of Governors for Pennsylvania's State System of Higher Education, effective November 2, 2022, after serving more than two years as the interim president. Long has more than 35 years of progressive experience in higher education. Prior to the interim appointment, which began July 31, 2020, Long served as the University's chief administrative, financial, and operations officer. Among his many accomplishments at ESU, he has been responsible for: stabilizing the University's financial condition; increasing the University cash reserves and reducing capital debt; lowering costs and increasing availability and access to student health services by partnering with a regional medical center; initiating the University's first academic space utilization study; enhancing campus accessibility; coordinating the development of an athletic master plan and upgrading athletic facilities, including adding air conditioning and a generator in Koehler Fieldhouse, painting and branding Eiler-Martin Stadium, replacing the turf for all outdoor sports, and partnering with the local municipality

and little league for baseball and softball facilities; coordinating the construction of a new student housing building which included new counseling and testing centers and the offices of the Dean of Student, Student Conduct, Accessibility Services and Title IX; and facilitating land development plans for the new University Center.

Prior to joining ESU, Long held leadership positions at two other Pennsylvania State System institutions, Kutztown and Cheyney universities. He served five years as assistant vice president of administration and finance at Kutztown University and during that time he worked six months as interim vice president for finance and administration at Cheyney University, in a loaned executive capacity. Long has served on a number of taskforces, committees and workgroups over his nearly 20 years in the State System, including: Tuition Alignment Committee, System Appropriation Funding Review Committee, State of PA 529 Advisory Board, co-chaired the State System Budget and ESU Sports Alignment Taskforces, and Kutztown University General Education Committee.

Prior to coming to the Pennsylvania State System, Long held multiple leadership positions at the University of Toledo and University of Toledo Physician Practice Group and played an instrumental role in the merger of the University of Toledo with the Medical University of Ohio. Long started his career in higher education at DeVry University – New Jersey where he worked for 18 years beginning as an assistant director of the office of student accounts and working his way to the chief administrative and financial position of the New Jersey campus. As one of the most senior administrative and financial officers in the northeast region, Long assisted with the opening and staffing of DeVry locations in New York, Florida, Pennsylvania and Virginia.

Long earned his bachelor's degree in math and political science from Drew University in Madison, N.J., and an M.B.A. from Monmouth University in West Long Branch, N.J. He has experience teaching college courses in business administration, financial accounting, and managerial accounting and statistics, and during his career has made numerous presentations at regional and national meetings and conferences. In 2013, Long was selected to serve on the Board of Directors for the Eastern Association of College and University Business Officers (EACUBO) and in 2017 he was selected as the association's treasurer, which he served until 2022. In 2025, EACUBO presented him with the KPMG Distinguished Service Award, the organization's highest award for his contributions to the organization.

Since being appointed into the University's chief executive role in 2020, President Long has been recognized by the Governor's Advisory Commission on Latino Affairs, the Monroe County NAACP, the Pocono Mountains United Way, and the Monroe County Chamber of Commerce. While serving as interim president, he was selected to serve as the chairperson of the PASSHE Freedom of Speech and Title VI Task Group. President Long currently serves as the presidential liaison to the PASSHE Board of Governors' Governance Committee, vice chair of the PASSHE Commission of Universities, a member of the Board of Directors for the Pocono Center for the Arts, an advisory board member for Communities in Schools of Eastern Pennsylvania, and Board of Governors for Valley Youth House. In 2024, he was appointed by Pennsylvania Governor Josh Shapiro to the newly established State Board of Higher Education.

Long is married to Evelyn and has three daughters, Alysha, Peyton, and Taylor.



Peter Pruim, Ph.D., Professor, Grand Marshal

Dr. Peter Pruim is Emeritus Professor in the Department of Modern Languages, Philosophy, and Religious Studies. He is the recipient of the 2020 ESU Distinguished Professor Award.

Dr. Pruim joined the ESU faculty in 1997 and served the Philosophy program for 25 years. He has published on the relationship between mind and brain, epistemology, and logic, as well as in the journal *Teaching Philosophy*. His contributions to the academic life of ESU students include co-directing the Honors Program, initiating the One Book/One Campus reading program, inviting Noam Chomsky to address the campus, bringing the author and future Governor of Maryland Wes Moore to speak, and developing the First-Year Experience program – for which he edited a textbook, *University Matters*.

Dr. Pruim remains a campus presence, sharing his border collie Rose with students for the Pause for Paws therapy-dog service at Kemp Library each week.



***Rosie Santos '19 M'26
Graduate Student Commencement Speaker***

Rosie Santos, a master's degree candidate from Delaware Water Gap, Pa., was selected from a pool of student speaker candidates to serve as the graduate student speaker for tonight's commencement ceremony.

Santos, a graduate student in instructional design technology, is earning her second degree from ESU after receiving her bachelor's degree in early childhood education in 2019. She is a second grade teacher at J.M. Hill Elementary in the East Stroudsburg Area School District and is the STEAM*R program coordinator for the building, delivering in-person and online instruction integrating science, technology, engineering, arts, and culture.

Santos was a member of the U.S. Army for nine years from 2013 to 2022 as a Medical Officer, 2nd Lieutenant. She served as platoon leader responsible for the readiness, training, and welfare of 30 soldiers and was a member of Company leadership overseeing approximately 100 personnel. She planned, executed, and assessed mission-oriented training and operational objectives.

A first-generation college student, Santos says that earning her undergraduate and graduate degrees made her feel significant responsibility to her family. Her time in the military shaped how she approaches responsibility and commitment, staying steady when things felt overwhelming and moving forward even when conditions were not ideal. She has taken that approach into her classroom, encouraging her students to work through challenges, and trusting that growth takes time. Instructional design technology has changed how she thinks about learning and the care that goes into it. She is representative of the graduate students who displayed discipline, sacrifice, and quiet persistence to earn their degrees.



Christopher Hunt '02 Ed.D. '18
Keynote Speaker

Dr. Hunt serves as Vice President and Dean for Inclusive Excellence at Moravian University, where he is a member of the President's Cabinet. In this role, he leads the university's efforts in academic support, inclusion and belonging, international education, and faculty and staff development—key areas that advance Moravian's strategic vision and community values.

He is the founder of the award-winning Reed Raymond '74 College Readiness Program of the Lehigh Valley, which prepares high school students for a successful transition to college. The program is inspired by his research and dissertation, "When Millennials Meet Baby Boomers: A Multiple Case Study on the Experiences of Black Male College Students," which examined the experiences of Black men who attended predominantly White institutions (PWIs) during the 1960s and 1970s, and again during the 2010s.

Dr. Hunt's career includes leadership roles at multiple institutions, including Assistant Vice President and Dean of Students at Lafayette College and Associate Provost for Community, Equity, and Diversity at the University of New England, where he also taught as an Adjunct Professor in the School of Arts and Humanities.

Outside of his professional commitments, Chris is the husband of a licensed therapist, and father of five children across two generations—three Generation Z young adults and boy/girl twin toddlers from Generation Beta. Dr. Hunt earned his bachelor's and doctoral degrees from East Stroudsburg University and a Master of Science in Administration from West Chester University. He is a longtime active member of Greater Shiloh Church and also a proud member of Omega Psi Phi Fraternity, Inc.

Program

PRELUDE: Music from My Neighbor Totoro	<i>Joe Hisaishi, arr. Hiroki Takasashi</i>
PROCESSIONAL: Procession of the Nobles*	<i>Mlada, Nikolai Rimsky-Korsakov, arr. Brian Hodge</i>
Greetings	Kenneth Long <i>President</i>
NATIONAL ANTHEM: The Presentation of the Colors.....	ESU ROTC
Singing led by	Bella Smith <i>ESU Sophomore</i>
Performed by	East Stroudsburg University Ceremonial Band <i>Brian Hodge, Director</i>
Greetings from the Council of Trustees	L. Patrick Ross '67 <i>Chair</i>
Graduate Student Commencement Address.....	Rosie Santos '19 M'26
Commencement Address	Christopher Hunt '02 Ed.D. '18 <i>Vice President and Dean for Inclusive Excellence, Moravian University</i>
Presentation of Candidates and Conferring of Degrees	Margaret J. Ball, D.M.A. <i>Provost and Vice President for Academic Affairs</i>
Underscore: Selected Piano Works of Claude Debussy.....	Brian Hodge
Greetings from the Alumni.....	Danica Hartenfels '97 <i>Vice President, East Stroudsburg University Alumni Board</i>
Singing of Alma Mater* (lyrics on last page)	Bella Smith
RECESSIONAL: Great Gate of Kiev+	<i>Mussorgsky/arr. Sohei Kano</i>

* Please stand for Processional and Alma Mater.

+ Please remain seated for Recessional.

Thank you to the following participants in this evening's ceremony:

Reader: Shawn Watkins, Associate Professor and Department Chair of Reading

Please turn off cell phones during the Commencement Ceremony. Thank you.

Candidates for Doctoral Degrees

DOCTOR OF EDUCATION

**Sonia Marisa Figueroa Reillo**

B.S., State University of New York, 1988

M.A., Columbia University, 1990

Dissertation: Self-Regulated Autonomous or Controlling Instructional Style of School at Home Parents in the Time of COVID-19 Pandemic

Chair: Dr. Diane Holben

Sonia M. Figueroa Reillo is a native New Yorker and bilingual professional educator, curriculum specialist, and educational consultant with extensive experience in urban education and diverse populations. She has worked with English Language Learners in New York City and across the original 13 states and Puerto Rico, supporting schools and major publishers in implementing effective instructional strategies. In 1997, she chose to homeschool her two children for over 18 years while continuing her consulting work, assisting administrators, training teachers, and developing K–16 curriculum that led to K–8 accreditation. She has presented at national and international conferences, including TESOL, NABE, and IRA, and has served as a keynote speaker in education and bilingual/ESL settings. Sonia is committed to lifelong learning and professional growth.

Dissertation Abstract: The COVID Pandemic affected the educational experiences of all our children, as well as their parents. From March 2020 to June 2020, all K-16 students were schooled at home. Some by choice, like the pre-pandemic homeschooler and others forced because of school closures. As the pandemic forced families to school at home, the School-at Home Parent emerged. This qualitative narrative inquiry sought to explore the lived experiences and instructional styles of 3 School-at Home Parents (SAHPs) and 3 Homeschool Parents (HSPs) after the COVID-19 pandemic, through the lens of Self-Determination Theory (Deci et al., 1985). Using a 14- question interview and The Motivator's Orientation Scale - Problems with Schools, a 32 questionnaire with eight vignettes, participants responded to how they would react to certain educational situations.

After a thematic analysis, the researcher found that the post pandemic SAHP and HSP adopted highly autonomous instructional styles. This finding contradicted the initial hypothesis, which predicted controlling tendencies among SAHPs and more autonomous tendencies among HSPs. Despite limitations in sample size and diversity, the findings support the importance of fostering autonomy-supportive learning environments. This research contributes to the discourse on school-at-home education and supports instructional practices aligned with the core tenets of Self-Determination Theory: autonomy, competence, and relatedness, while also providing a foundation for future studies.

Candidates for Doctoral Degrees

DOCTOR OF EDUCATION

**Maria Francois**

B.A., East Stroudsburg University of Pennsylvania, 2008

M.S., University of Scranton, 2020

Dissertation: Strengthening the Teacher Pipeline: The Effect of simSchool Simulations on High School Students' Teacher Self-Efficacy and Teacher Identity

Chair: Dr. (Mary) Elizabeth Azukas

Maria Francois is an educator at East Stroudsburg North High School. She is committed to supporting students' academic growth while fostering confidence, curiosity, and a strong sense of identity. In addition to her classroom work, Maria serves as the advisor for the Future Educator Cohort, mentoring students interested in pursuing careers in education. Her professional interests include student development, teacher preparation, and innovative instructional practices. Maria's doctoral research focuses on the impact of simulation-based learning experiences on students' self-efficacy and teacher identity development. Through both her teaching and research, she seeks to better understand how educational experiences shape students' confidence, motivation, and career aspirations. Maria is dedicated to creating meaningful learning environments that empower students to see themselves as capable learners and future professionals. Outside her work at East Stroudsburg School District, she is a mother to Donald Junior, Daniel, and David, and wife to Mr. Donald Francois.

Dissertation Abstract: The United States continues to face a critical teacher shortage, with particularly severe impacts in states like Pennsylvania. In response, innovative interventions are needed to attract, prepare, and retain the next generation of educators. This mixed-methods action research study examined the impact of simSchool, a virtual classroom simulation platform, on the teacher self-efficacy and teacher identity development of high school students enrolled in a Future Educator Cohort (FEC) in a public school district in Pennsylvania. Forty students participated, with the experimental group (Mountain Valley North High School) using simSchool and the control group (Mountain Valley South High School) not using simulations. Quantitative data were collected through pre- and post-assessments using the Teacher Sense of Self-Efficacy Scale and the Teaching Perceptions Semantic Differential, while qualitative data were gathered through student interviews and field observation notes.

Findings revealed that students who engaged with simSchool demonstrated greater gains in teacher self-efficacy and more robust development of teacher identity compared to their peers. The simulations provided opportunities for mastery experiences, reflective practice, and professional role exploration, key components in developing confidence and commitment to teaching. This study contributes to the growing body of research on simulation-based teacher preparation and highlights the potential of early, technology-enhanced interventions to strengthen the educator pipeline and address long-standing workforce challenges.

Candidates for Doctoral Degrees

DOCTOR OF EDUCATION

**Jan Leigh Hoffman**

B.S., East Stroudsburg University of Pennsylvania, 1997

M.Ed., Clemson University, 1999

Dissertation: Student Success Among First-Year Undeclared Students: The Influence of Noncognitive Factors on Persistence and Academic Achievement

Chair: Dr. Diane Holben

Jan Hoffman is an Academic Success Coach at East Stroudsburg University, dedicated to helping students reach their academic potential and define their purpose in college. She supports students in the College of Health Sciences and across programs including Biological Sciences, Chemistry,

Physics, Acting for Theatre, TV & Film, and English (Writing Concentration). Her work centers on applying research-informed coaching practices to promote student growth, development, and academic success.

Since beginning her career at ESU in 2001 in Career Development, Jan has led key initiatives such as the Exploratory Studies Major Exploration Program and the ACHIEVE Academic Jeopardy Program. She completed her doctoral internship with the Association for the Coaching and Tutoring Profession (ACTP), where she developed a higher education–focused academic coaching curriculum now used in its nationally recognized certification program. She serves as a lead facilitator with ACTP, training and certifying academic coaches nationwide. Jan lives in Breinigsville, Pennsylvania, with her husband, Ray, and their sons, Brady and Colby.

Dissertation Abstract: Student success in higher education is influenced not only by cognitive ability but also by noncognitive factors that shape motivation, behavior, and academic engagement. These factors are particularly important because they are malleable and can be intentionally developed over time, allowing students to strengthen the skills and beliefs that support academic success. First-year undeclared students are especially vulnerable during the transition to college as they navigate academic expectations while developing direction and identity. This quantitative study examines the relationship between selected noncognitive factors and academic persistence and achievement among first-year undeclared students. Eight noncognitive factors were analyzed and organized into three themes: academic motivation, academic conscientiousness, and academic mindset.

Findings indicate that academic motivation is strongly associated with persistence, highlighting the role of students' underlying drive in continued enrollment. In contrast, academic performance is more closely linked to specific behaviors and beliefs. Academic assertiveness, motivation toward success, and external locus of control accounted for a greater proportion of variance in GPA, emphasizing the importance of actionable behaviors and perceptions in academic outcomes. Overall, persistence and academic achievement operate through distinct noncognitive pathways, with motivation supporting persistence and specific behaviors and beliefs more strongly associated with academic performance. These findings underscore the importance of targeted academic support and interventions that address both motivational and behavioral dimensions of student success.

Candidates for Doctoral Degrees

DOCTOR OF EDUCATION

**Wendy E. Moncak**

B.A., Millersville University of Pennsylvania, 2003

M.S., Wilkes University, 2012

Dissertation: Navigating Ambiguity: Instructional Coaches' Perceptions of Role Clarity and the Influence of Principal Leadership

Chair: Dr. Beth Rajan-Sockman

Wendy E. Moncak is an expert instructional leader with over 18 years of experience as a dedicated educator and coach. Specializing in building teacher capacity through transformative professional development and collaborative coaching, earned her doctorate to further her mission of fostering educational excellence. Wendy currently serves as a district instructional coach for the School District of Lancaster, where she leads district-wide curriculum alignment and professional learning. A champion for sustainable academic growth, she was a key driver of the successful IB MYP authorization for all district middle schools and a core member of the team that navigated Reynolds Middle School's successful exit from Comprehensive School Improvement (CSI) status. Her doctoral work reflects a deep-seated commitment to leveraging job-embedded coaching to ensure high-impact results and equitable student outcomes for all learners.

Dissertation Abstract: Instructional coaching has emerged as a vital strategy for improving teacher practice and student outcomes. Although researchers have studied the impact of coaching on teacher practice and student outcomes, there is comparatively less understanding of the internal challenges that instructional coaches encounter in their roles. This study examines two key aspects of the coaching experience: how instructional coaches describe their experiences with role ambiguity and the extent to which they attribute principal leadership to their role clarity and overall effectiveness. This study employs a mixed-methods explanatory sequential design, beginning with the collection of quantitative survey data from instructional coaches across Pennsylvania, followed by qualitative interviews to gain deeper insight into emerging patterns.

Findings from this research offer a nuanced understanding of the organizational and leadership dynamics that shape the instructional coaching experience. The results have important implications for school leaders, district policymakers, and professional development providers seeking to enhance the impact of instructional coaching by addressing role definition and leadership support structures.

Candidates for Doctoral Degrees

DOCTOR OF EDUCATION

**Melinda Quiñones-Arias**

B.S., DeSales University, 2002

M.B.A., DeSales University, 2013

Dissertation: *Hermana to Hermana: Supporting Latine Women's Retainment at Predominantly white Institutions Through the Implementation of Culturally Relevant Practices*

Chair: Dr. Cornelia Sewell-Allen

Melinda Quiñones-Arias is a higher education leader, mentor, and advocate whose work is rooted in access, belonging, and transformation. As Director of Multicultural Services at Kutztown University, she leads initiatives that empower students to persist, lead, and thrive. With over a decade of experience across enrollment management, residence life, and multicultural affairs, her leadership reflects a deep understanding of the student journey and the power of community. Her doctoral research centers on the retention of Latinx women within predominantly white institutions through culturally relevant practices, work that affirms identity, voice, and possibility. A proud first-generation college graduate, Quiñones-Arias honors the legacy of her parents, Hector and Nilsa Quiñones, whose love, resilience, and sacrifice paved the way. She is a proud Puerto Rican, mother, wife, sister, aunt, and mentor, committed to widening pathways, lifting others as she rises, and ensuring that those who follow not only have a seat, but space to belong.

Dissertation Abstract: This study explores how culturally relevant practices shape the retention, sense of belonging, and overall success of Latine women at a predominantly white institution. Grounded in Yosso's (2005) Community Cultural Wealth framework and García's (2019) Culturally Relevant Practices model, the study centers the voices and lived experiences of participants through a qualitative, phenomenological approach. Using semi-structured interviews and testimonios, the research examines how cultural identity, support systems, and campus environments influence students' experiences.

The findings highlight the importance of culturally affirming spaces, meaningful mentorship, and strong community connections in helping students feel seen, supported, and motivated to persist. Participants shared how these experiences strengthened their confidence and sense of belonging. At the same time, they described challenges related to visibility, representation, and navigating spaces that did not always reflect or support their identities. Despite these barriers, participants drew on their strengths, including family support, resilience, and community, to continue toward their goals. This study offers practical recommendations for educators and student affairs professionals to create more supportive, inclusive environments. By intentionally centering student experiences and implementing equity-driven practices, institutions can improve belonging, strengthen support systems, and increase the retention and success of Latine women in higher education.

Candidates for Doctoral Degrees

DOCTOR OF EDUCATION

**Baru Roberson-Hornsby**

B.S., Moravian College, 2019

M.S., Shippensburg University of Pennsylvania, 2021

Dissertation: Career Services Preparedness to Support Black Undergraduate Students: A Qualitative Study on Practitioner Training and Cultural Responsiveness

Chair: Dr. Kristopher R. Weeks

Baru Roberson-Hornsby's research centers around improving the career outcomes of Black undergraduate students attending four-year colleges and universities. Currently, he serves as Assistant Dean of the Junior Experience at Bryn Mawr College, in which he advises the undergraduate junior class. He holds previous experience working in career development and collaborates with career services in his everyday work. Baru has held several leadership roles, served on various institutional committees, and designed and implemented programming for marginalized populations of students throughout his higher education career. Baru is a first-generation college graduate and is married to his loving wife, Taylyn, and is a son, brother, nephew, grandson, and friend amongst his support system.

Dissertation Abstract: Black undergraduate students engage with career services at higher rates than their peers, yet continue to experience disproportionately lower internship and employment outcomes. This suggests systemic inequities and raises concerns regarding the preparedness of career services professionals to support these students effectively despite high engagement. Career development historically operated from frameworks designed for white, male populations, and contemporary models often lack nuanced culturally responsive strategies specific to Black students.

The purpose of this qualitative study is to, via semi-structured interviews, examine how prepared career services professionals feel to advise Black undergraduate students, and the extent to which their training, confidence, and advising practices incorporate culturally relevant practices (CRP), cultural humility, and elements of Social Cognitive Career Theory (SCCT). Two overarching research questions guide this study. How do career services professionals describe their preparedness to support and coach Black undergraduate students, and how do career services professionals understand and make sense of their training and professional development related to supporting Black undergraduate students? The study will consist of qualitative ethnographic interviews. Data will be analyzed through the means of thematic coding. This study intends to inform the career development industry and contribute to a positive impact on equitable career outcomes for Black undergraduate students.

Candidates for Doctoral Degrees

DOCTOR OF EDUCATION

**Megan P. Smith**

B.A., Connecticut College, 2008

M.L.I.S., Rutgers University, 2012

Dissertation: Student Perceptions of Social Ethic Supports in Higher Education Academic Library Collections: An Action Research Study

Chair: Dr. Beth Rajan Sockman

Megan P. Smith is a faculty librarian and collection management specialist at East Stroudsburg University, with professional experience in academic library leadership, inclusive collection development, and student-centered services. Her background includes serving as department chair and interim library director, roles that inform her interests in strategic planning, organizational change, and equitable resource allocation within higher education libraries. Her research focuses on student perceptions of diversity, equity, inclusion, and belonging in academic library collections. Her broader scholarly interests include academic library leadership, user experience, and the role of libraries as inclusive, student-affirming spaces that support institutional equity and student success. She lives in New Jersey with her husband, Michael Smith, and their daughter, Kara.

Dissertation Abstract: Academic libraries in the United States are designed to serve all students within their institutions; however, as student populations become increasingly diverse, many libraries have not been fully structured to meet the needs of varied demographic groups. This study investigates student perceptions of diversity, equity, and inclusion within academic library collections. Guided by an action research framework, it explores how students— particularly those from underrepresented backgrounds— perceive their university library’s efforts to foster equity and belonging through its collections.

Data was collected through a student survey administered at a medium-sized public university in northeastern Pennsylvania, providing localized insights into the inclusivity of the institution’s collection development practices. Findings revealed both strengths and gaps in the library’s approach to supporting diverse student needs. Based on these results, the study proposes actionable recommendations to enhance equitable representation, strengthen students’ sense of belonging, and inform future collection development and academic library leadership practices.

Candidates for Doctoral Degrees

DOCTOR OF EDUCATION

**Justin Robert Tice**

B.S., East Stroudsburg University of Pennsylvania, 2009

M.Ed., East Stroudsburg University of Pennsylvania, 2011

Dissertation: The Unconscious Ecology of the Schoolhouse: Investigating the Relationship Between Regional Attitudes and Student Perceptions of School Climate

Chair: Dr. Diane Holben

Justin Robert Tice is in his third year as an assistant principal at Whitehall High School. A two-time graduate of East Stroudsburg University, he previously served as a biology and chemistry teacher within the Whitehall-Coplay School District for 13 years. His doctoral research aims to advance educational equity, and he is deeply grateful to have completed his administrative internship in his home district. Residing in Orefield, Tice shares this milestone with his wife, Kelly, and their five-year-old daughter, Shelby. He extends his profound gratitude to his parents, Richard and Debra, and his siblings, Richie and Heather, whose lifelong support made this educational journey possible.

Dissertation Abstract: Grounded in Bronfenbrenner's Ecological Systems Theory, this quantitative correlational study investigated the relationship between county-level racial implicit bias and the school climate perceptions of Black secondary students in Pennsylvania. Analyzing preexisting datasets from Project Implicit and the Pennsylvania Youth Survey (N > 100,000 across 60 counties), regression analyses examined four school climate domains against the mean county-level racial implicit bias.

While regional bias did not significantly correlate with students' perceptions of safety, participation, or staff relationships, a significant negative relationship with their affective response to school exists. Specifically, higher regional bias predicted increased reports of Black secondary students hating school. Additionally, stepwise regression identified three key predictors of regional bias. These results suggest that while schools may act as structural buffers against certain external biases, their affective atmospheres remain susceptible to regional influence, offering critical implications for district leaders regarding professional learning, programming, and policy development.

Candidates for Doctoral Degrees

DOCTOR OF EDUCATION

**Rhonda Walker-Footman**

B.A., Metropolitan College of New York, 2001

M.Ed., East Stroudsburg University of Pennsylvania, 2013

Dissertation: Middle School Teachers' Perceptions on the Use of Artificial Intelligence in the Classroom

Chair: Dr. Caroline DiPipi-Hoy

Rhonda Walker-Footman is a native New Yorker who has resided in East Stroudsburg for the past 26 years. After a distinguished 15-year career on Wall Street, where she held positions with Goldman Sachs, JPMorgan Chase, and Citigroup, Ms. Walker-Footman transitioned into the field of education. Over the past 13 years, she has served in diverse educational roles, teaching across grade levels from kindergarten through 12th grade. She has also contributed to higher education as an adjunct professor at Northampton Community College and as Curriculum Director for Penn State University's Teen Entrepreneur Program. Ms. Walker-Footman previously served as a middle school administrator at Commonwealth Charter Academy, where she was recognized for her ability to positively influence the academic mindsets of struggling students. She continues her commitment to educational leadership as Assistant Principal of J.T. Lambert Intermediate School.

Dissertation Abstract: Artificial intelligence (AI) has rapidly permeated multiple sectors of society, including education, reshaping how knowledge is accessed, processed, and applied. As AI technologies increasingly influence instructional practices, understanding teachers' perceptions is essential for effective classroom integration. Grounded in Disruptive Innovation Theory and the Concerns-Based Adoption Model (CBAM), this mixed-methods study examines middle school teachers' perceptions of artificial intelligence in classroom instruction. Although research consistently demonstrates that technology can enhance student engagement and achievement, educators continue to encounter both first-order and second-order barriers to implementation, with internal beliefs and self-efficacy presenting significant challenges.

Using a survey and follow-up interviews, this study investigated how teachers' concerns, experiences, and beliefs shape their willingness to integrate AI into their instructional practices. Focusing on middle school settings is particularly significant given the developmental importance of early adolescence and the long-term implications for workforce preparedness. Overall, the findings suggest that teachers are neither indifferent nor resistant to AI; rather, they demonstrate substantial informational interest, student-centered concern, and a readiness to refine or collaborate around its use. Future research is recommended with a particular focus on elementary-grade classrooms, where foundational academic skills remain a primary curricular emphasis.

Candidates for Doctoral Degrees

DOCTORATE OF HEALTH SCIENCES

**Joselyn Correa-Melendez**

B.S., East Stroudsburg University of Pennsylvania, 2016

M.P.H., East Stroudsburg University of Pennsylvania, 2018

Dissertation: Health Care's Role in Addressing Food and Nutrition Insecurity During Early Childhood

Chair: Dr. Shala E. Davis

Joselyn Correa-Meléndez is a pediatric healthcare leader dedicated to improving child health outcomes through innovative, partnership-driven initiatives across clinical and community settings. She leads strategic initiatives at the Perrucci Center for Children's Health and Well-Being at Jefferson Health–Lehigh Valley Health Network, advancing early childhood health

and collaborating with internal and external partners to strengthen community impact. She brings more than 15 years of experience in community health and healthcare, with a focus on social drivers of health, early childhood well-being, chronic disease management, and cross-sector collaboration. Joselyn serves on the Board of Directors for the American College of Healthcare Executives (ACHE) Eastern Pennsylvania Chapter as community engagement co-chair. She resides in Bethlehem with her husband, Rocky, their two children, Anthony and Josie, and their dog, Forrest. Her work is guided by a commitment to strengthening systems that support children, families, and communities.

Dissertation Abstract: Food and nutrition are vital in children's early lives and play a key role in early childhood development. Household and child food and nutrition insecurity are linked to higher chances of poor health outcomes and developmental risks. Pediatric primary care settings are increasingly recognized as key access points for screening and referral to supportive services, including the Special Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women, Infants, and Children (WIC). However, limited research has examined how healthcare organizations operationalize collaboration with WIC in practice.

The purpose of this study was to apply an implementation science framework to examine pediatric primary care healthcare workers' knowledge, attitudes, and perceptions regarding food and nutrition insecurity screening and intervention practices, and to assess barriers, facilitators, and feasibility factors influencing implementation of a WIC–Primary Care collaboration model. A cross-sectional survey design was used to collect quantitative and qualitative data from pediatric healthcare staff across clinical and non-clinical roles.

Findings indicate strong awareness of food and nutrition insecurity and broad support for screening and intervention. However, variability in perceived preparedness, workflow constraints, and limited referral infrastructure emerged as key barriers. Despite these challenges, staff demonstrated strong mission alignment and willingness to collaborate with WIC programs. Guided by the Consolidated Framework for Implementation Research (CFIR) 2.0, these findings suggest that successful implementation requires both individual-level readiness and system-level supports, including standardized referral processes, data-sharing infrastructure, and aligned reimbursement mechanisms to strengthen healthcare–community partnerships and improve early childhood nutrition outcomes.

Candidates for Doctoral Degrees

DOCTORATE OF HEALTH SCIENCES

**Iris Jennifer Espinosa**

B.A., College of Saint Elizabeth, 2008

M.A., College of Saint Elizabeth, 2012

Dissertation: Imposter Syndrome Among First-Generation Graduate Students: A Mixed-Methods Study Through a Health Equity Lens

Chair: Dr. Shala E. Davis

Iris Espinosa serves as the Assistant Dean of Academics at Northampton Community College, where she leads initiatives focused on student success, equity, and access in higher education. As a first-generation college graduate, she has a personal passion for supporting underrepresented and first-generation students as they navigate higher education and develop pathways to persistence and degree completion. Motivated by her professional interest, Iris examined impostor syndrome through a health equity lens amongst first-generation graduate students. The study utilized open-ended questions to explore how institutional environments, cultural factors, and social determinants may shape mental health and academic persistence. Through the combination of research and practice, Iris is committed to advancing equity-informed policies that will further strengthen inclusion while supporting student wellness. Iris resides in Pennsylvania with her husband, their three children, three cats, and two dogs, all of whom have contributed greatly to her academic journey.

Dissertation Abstract: Impostor syndrome has been characterized as the presence of persistent feelings of self-doubt mingled with the fear of being exposed as a fraud despite clear evidence of competence. Although it has been extensively studied within professional groups and undergraduate students, a significant gap remains in understanding the experiences of first-generation graduate students. The framework of this study utilized a health equity lens to examine impostor syndrome as a psychological experience influenced not only by individual factors but also by broader structural and institutional factors. Such factors impact persistence and well-being across the study's population.

The research utilized a convergent mixed-methods design that combined quantitative and qualitative approaches to explore the prevalence and the personal experiences of impostor syndrome among 17 first-generation graduate students using the Clance Impostor Phenomenon Scale (CIPS). Reliability analysis showed that the instrument had excellent internal consistency (Cronbach's $\alpha = .933$). Descriptive statistics indicated a mean CIPS score of 64.12 (SD = 5.57), indicating the sample fell into frequent impostor experience category. An established interpretive criterion was developed, and 76.5 percent of participants acknowledged frequent impostor experience, suggesting a high prevalence of impostor perceptions among the survey participants. Inferential analysis were conducted to explore gender, program level, and employment field variants of impostor syndrome. T-tests and one-way analyses of variance of independent samples found no significant differences for the tested variables.

In general, results indicated that impostor syndrome was common among first-generation graduate students and was consistent across demographic groups regardless of gender, ethnicity, or employment fields. Framed in terms of health equity, these findings indicated the need for structural and institutional intervention to overcome barriers to better support success for first-generation graduate students.

Candidates for Doctoral Degrees

DOCTORATE OF HEALTH SCIENCES

**Brendan Sinclair Finn**

B.S., Bloomsburg University of Pennsylvania, 2019

M.S., East Stroudsburg University of Pennsylvania, 2020

Dissertation: Assessing the Reliability and Validity of a Unilateral Eccentric Hamstring Strength Assessment Using NCAA Division II Female Lacrosse Players

Chair: Dr. Gavin Moir

Brendan Finn serves as an instructor of exercise science at East Stroudsburg University where he teaches both lecture and lab-based courses focused primarily on exercise physiology, kinesiology, strength and conditioning theory and sport performance. Brendan is also the Coordinator of

Sport Performance at ESU where he is responsible for strength and conditioning training for all 22 varsity sports on campus. He received his Bachelor of Science degree in Exercise Science from Bloomsburg University in 2019 before moving on and earning his Master of Science degree in Exercise Science from East Stroudsburg University in 2020. Brendan has presented research related to strength and conditioning and sport performance in collegiate athletics at numerous regional and national conferences for the American College of Sports Medicine and conducted his dissertation research on measuring hamstring muscle strength and injury in collegiate field-sport athletes.

Dissertation Abstract: Hamstring strain injuries are amongst the most prevalent and recurring injuries in competitive sports. With a multitude of risk factors, eccentric hamstring strength has been identified as the main modifiable risk factor for these injuries. Intervention strategies have been a primary point of emphasis but the methods of assessing eccentric hamstring strength are limited and their efficacy is unclear. The purpose of the present study was to assess the reliability and validity of an eccentric single-leg Romanian deadlift (SLRDL) assessment to measure eccentric hamstring strength in NCAA Division II field-sport athletes while creating force-velocity profiles for all subjects.

Seventeen female field-sport athletes performed a 1-repetition maximum (1RM) SLRDL on each leg, followed by three experimental sessions performed on separate occasions. Each experimental session consisted of a “low load” trial (30% 1RM) and a “high load” trial (80% 1RM). Mechanical data during the eccentric and concentric phases of the movement were collected during the experimental trials using force plates and a motion capture system. All mechanical data demonstrated good to excellent reliability across the experimental sessions (ICC:0.87–0.98). The slopes of the force-velocity profiles were generally reliable across the experimental sessions, with the eccentric and concentric force-velocity slopes demonstrating acceptable reliability (ICC:0.77–0.99) apart from that of the non-dominant front leg (ICC:0.67). This study adds to the growing body of literature on eccentric hamstring strength assessment and provides strength and conditioning professionals with a practical tool to evaluate their athletes, and a means of monitoring changes in their athletes.

Candidates for Doctoral Degrees

DOCTORATE OF HEALTH SCIENCES

**James D. Galdieri**

B.S., King's College, 2005

M.S., King's College, 2009

Dissertation: Health Behaviors and Caregiver Perspectives: Evaluating the Impact of the Special Olympics Healthy Athletes Program for Individuals with Intellectual Disabilities in Pennsylvania

Chair: Dr. Shala E. Davis

James (Jayme) D. Galdieri has been a faculty athletic trainer at East Stroudsburg University since July 2017. His sport responsibilities include football, baseball, tennis, and swimming. He also serves as a preceptor for the University's Athletic Training Education Program. Galdieri has been involved with Special Olympics Pennsylvania as a medical volunteer since 2002 and has been the athletic training coordinator for the organization's Summer Games since 2012. In 2022, Galdieri served as the Medical Director for Team Pennsylvania and traveled with them to Orlando for the 2022 Special Olympics USA Games. He will again travel with Team Pennsylvania to Minnesota this summer for the 2026 Special Olympics USA Games. A native of Scranton, Galdieri lives with his family in the Wyoming Valley.

Dissertation Abstract: This research study examined the impact of the Special Olympics Pennsylvania (SOPA) Healthy Athletes program on health behaviors and caregiver perspectives among individuals with intellectual disabilities (IID) in Pennsylvania. The study assessed enjoyment, perceived value, knowledge retention, and compliance with healthy lifestyle recommendations following participation in the program at the 2025 SOPA Summer Games. Employing a mixed-methods design, quantitative data were gathered via the Intrinsic Motivation Inventory survey from 116 athletes. Using a Likert scale of 1 (not at all true) to 7 (very true), respondents measured the subscales of value/usefulness ($\bar{x}=6.53$), interest/enjoyment ($\bar{x}=6.53$), and perceived choice ($\bar{x}=5.84$). A qualitative case study consisted of semi-structured interviews with one athlete and their caregiver to explore program experiences, care gaps, and caregiver strain.

Results revealed high athlete agreement on the program's value and enjoyment, with strong internal reliability (Cronbach's $\alpha=0.91$ overall). Thematic analysis identified positive outcomes, including enhanced independence, lifelong advocacy, adaptive coping, and health promotion, alongside barriers such as provider misunderstandings of IID needs, logistical event constraints, and stagnant educational messaging. Caregivers reported emotional strain but noted the program's role in fostering autonomy and addressing unmet needs. Findings affirmed the Healthy Athletes program as a critical resource for free screenings, education, and advocacy, aligning with the transtheoretical model's action and maintenance stages. Recommendations include expanding outreach to local events, updating content for repeat participants, and conducting longitudinal studies to track long-term compliance and objective health metrics.

Candidates for Doctoral Degrees

DOCTORATE OF HEALTH SCIENCES



Scott Rodney Gallup Jr.

B.S., East Stroudsburg University of Pennsylvania, 2016

M.S., East Stroudsburg University of Pennsylvania, 2018

Dissertation: Interprofessional Collaborative Practice Among Athletic Trainers and Strength Coaches: Perceived Benefits, Barriers, Experiences and Recommendations.

Chair: Dr. Shawn Munford

Scott Gallup currently serves as a tenure-track faculty member within ESU's Department of Athletic Training, where he has completed his eighth year of teaching within the program.

His doctoral research, titled Interprofessional Collaborative Practice Among Athletic Trainers and Strength Coaches: Perceived Benefits, Barriers, Experiences and Recommendations, was inspired by his career in sports medicine and his commitment to delivering the highest quality of care to patient-athletes. Currently residing in Easton, Scott is married to his wife Jessica and a proud father of one son, Clark. Scott finds inspiration in his family both at home and in his work and thanks them for their unwavering support throughout his academic journey.

Dissertation Abstract: Understanding athletic trainers' (ATs) and strength and conditioning coaches' (SCCs) perceptions of interprofessional collaborative practice (IPCP) may improve integration in athlete care. This cross-sectional mixed-methods study examined perceptions of IPCP benefits and barriers, experiences, and recommendations among collegiate ATs and SCCs. A modified version of the Athletic Training Interprofessional Scale (ATIPS) was utilized to collect demographic data, compare perceptions of benefits and barriers to IPCP, and identify perceived benefits, barriers, and recommendations. Follow-up interviews provided deeper insight into perceptions, experiences and recommendations. Independent-samples t-tests indicated no significant difference in perceived IPCP benefits between ATs ($M = 35.90$, $SD = 3.37$) and SCCs ($M = 35.40$, $SD = 2.69$), $t(68) = 0.55$, $p = 0.585$. However, SCCs reported significantly greater perceived barriers ($M = 31.82$, $SD = 4.02$) than ATs ($M = 28.90$, $SD = 4.32$), $t(68) = 2.46$, $p = 0.016$.

Thematic analysis of qualitative data revealed benefits including improved quality and efficiency of care, enhanced outcomes, injury prevention, athlete-centered care, and increased role clarity, along with barriers including poor communication, professional siloing, lack of role clarity, knowledge gaps, staffing imbalances, and time constraints. Participant experiences with IPCP emphasized frequent, informal communication, a team-based approach, and variability in collaborative engagement. Recommendations were made regarding the importance of trust and mutual respect, frequent and formalized interactions, integrated education, shared systems, and shared physical spaces. Additional findings suggested SCCs may play a collaborative role in injury prevention, strength rehabilitation, end-stage rehabilitation, return to play, and modified training for injured athletes.

Candidates for Doctoral Degrees

DOCTORATE OF HEALTH SCIENCES

**Marc W. Gaudet**

B.S., East Stroudsburg University of Pennsylvania, 2017

M.S., East Stroudsburg University of Pennsylvania, 2018

Dissertation: NCAA Division II Student-Athletes' Mental Health: Investigating Best Practice for Screening During the Academic Year

Chair: Dr. Shala E. Davis

Marc Gaudet has been an instructor of education in East Stroudsburg University's Exercise Science Department since 2019. He has taught a variety of courses ranging from theoretical to practical strength and conditioning concepts to sports performance psychology. Marc has also developed undergraduate coursework for exercise science to impact the professional development of students to prepare them for the demands of the workforce. Along with education, Marc is a practicing strength and conditioning professional working with ESU's football program, as well as owner and operator of a small sports performance business in the private sector, VETS Performance. Through graduate assistantships, internships, and mentorship programs, Gaudet also has extensive experience of educating students in practical environments directly in the field. This dual approach and lens allow for a holistic learning approach that best prepares his students for the rigors of the profession.

Dissertation Abstract: Mental Health (MH) is a complex construct that lacks a unified definition. Student-Athletes (SA's) are a unique subpopulation with sport and academic demands placed on them. The National Collegiate Athletics Association (NCAA) encourages an annual approach to MH screenings across the academic year. It is uncommon for universities to utilize serial screenings, but limited resources and feasibility deter NCAA member universities from implementation. The purposes of this study were to (1) evaluate the effectiveness and feasibility of serial screenings for SA's across an academic year (2) to identify perceptions of the workforce regarding MH.

A total of 373 SA's were screened for four MH measures (Depression, Anxiety, Life Satisfaction, & Sport Satisfaction) throughout the academic year. General and Urgent Referral protocols were utilized in accordance with campus counseling services to protect subjects. 12 workforce employees were interviewed individually with transcripts analyzed thematically. ANOVA analyses were run with pairwise comparisons with five data points. Low adherence (44.0%) at Fall Finals led to exclusion of this data. There were significant differences relative to baseline for MI and PMH measures. Twenty-two (22) additional Urgent Referrals were identified after baseline screenings. Seven main themes were discovered. There is a need for serial screenings for SA's MH as there are (1) Significant fluctuations in MH across the year, and (2) Significant identifications of SA's requiring Urgent follow up outside of baseline. Regardless, there are challenges for individual institutions when considering resource allocations, referral protocols, and useful for serial MH screening practices.

Candidates for Doctoral Degrees

DOCTORATE OF HEALTH SCIENCES

**Amie Lee Gross**

B.S., Mansfield University of Pennsylvania, 2018

M.S., University at Buffalo, 2020

Dissertation: An Evaluation of Burnout and Work-Life Balance in Diabetes Educators in a Post-Pandemic Healthcare Setting

Chair: Dr. Shala E. Davis

Amie is a registered dietitian and certified diabetes care and education specialist. She is from and currently resides in Troy, Pa. She works for a private practice in Elmira, New York where she provides outpatient nutrition services and diabetes education to patients in the Twin Tiers region.

Dissertation Abstract: The continued rise in rates of diabetes and prediabetes, as well as the evolution of diabetes treatment options, increases the demand for healthcare professionals who specialize in diabetes management. The certified diabetes care and education specialist (CDCES) is a member of the diabetes care team with extensive training and expertise in diabetes prevention and management. Diabetes educators are subject to burnout and work-life imbalance like other healthcare professions; however, there is very little research dedicated to burnout and work-life balance within this population, so the present study aimed to evaluate and compare burnout and work-like balance in 128 new and seasoned diabetes educators using a mixed methods approach.

Quantitative data was obtained using a standardized survey, and qualitative data was obtained using open-ended questions. Results indicated that there were no statistically significant differences in emotional exhaustion ($t(78.26)$, $p = 0.21$), depersonalization ($t(85.45)$, $p = 0.91$), or personal achievement ($t(89.02)$, $p = 0.61$) between new and seasoned diabetes educators; however, important themes were discovered during the thematic analysis, suggesting that the level of burnout can be similar between groups, but the reason for burnout can differ depending on how long someone has been practicing as a diabetes educator. Through this study, diabetes educators were able to contribute to the body of literature related to burnout and work life balance in the healthcare setting.

Candidates for Doctoral Degrees

DOCTORATE OF HEALTH SCIENCES

**Kristina Gulics**

B.A., Columbia University, 2009

M.S.W., Rutgers University, 2012

Dissertation: Exploring the “Emerging Sport for Women” Process: Identifying Supports and Barriers Which May Influence STUNT Coaches’ Perceptions and Experiences While Moving Through the Process of Achieving NCAA Championship Status

Chair: Dr. Shala E. Davis

Kristina Gulics is an accomplished coach, educator, and leader whose multifaceted career encompasses K–12 education, collegiate athletics, administration, and social work. As the founding head coach for both STUNT and Acrobatics and Tumbling at East Stroudsburg University, she has been instrumental in advancing NCAA Emerging Sports for Women. Ms. Gulics has been instrumental in promoting NCAA eligibility and pioneering student-athlete wellness and academic programs within her growing sport. Previously as an educator, her decade-long teaching tenure at Woodbridge High School included curriculum development in African American Studies and Facing History, as well as leadership in the National and History Honor Societies. A U.S. Navy veteran and advocate for diversity, equity, and inclusion, Ms. Gulics has contributed to curriculum initiatives, led outreach efforts in Ghana, and served on the executive board of the New Jersey Cheer and Dance State Coaches Association. She is also a devoted mother to Patrick and Taylor Gulics.

Dissertation Abstract: The dissertation explores the lived experiences of collegiate coaches moving through the Emerging Sports for Women framework. Grounded in constructivist ontology and social constructivist epistemology, the study investigates how STUNT coaches perceive and experience systemic supports and barriers shaping their professional and institutional contexts. Through qualitative semi-structured focus group interviews with coaches from NCAA Division II and Division III private institutions, the research identifies recurring themes of structural inequities, legitimacy challenges, gender bias, and advocacy within emerging women’s sports.

Findings reveal that STUNT coaches navigate a complex environment characterized by intersecting institutional and cultural barriers, often contending with underfunding, limited institutional recognition, and enduring stereotypes linked to cheerleading. Yet coaches also demonstrate resilience, advocacy, and strategic adaptation to propel the sport toward NCAA championship status. The study highlights that the path to legitimacy and sustainability for emerging women’s sports requires more than compliance with NCAA benchmarks; it demands equitable resource distribution, mentorship development, and inclusive governance structures.

The research contributes to existing literature by revealing how evolving gender relations, institutional dynamics, and social constructs shape the professional realities of women coaches in new sport ecosystems. Implications emphasize the necessity for NCAA policy reform, particularly through accountability in institutional funding practices, transparency in sport recognition processes, and programmatic inclusion of coach and athlete perspectives. Recommendations include expanding mentorship networks, formalizing advocacy channels, and integrating intersectionality into future gender equity assessments. This dissertation offers a sustainable framework for policy, practice, and research dedicated to achieving authentic equity in collegiate athletics.

Candidates for Doctoral Degrees

DOCTORATE OF HEALTH SCIENCES

**Tiffany Jordan**

B.S., East Stroudsburg University of Pennsylvania, 2020

M.S., East Stroudsburg University of Pennsylvania, 2021

Dissertation: The Impact of Cardiac Rehabilitation on Depression and Quality of Life Across Different Surgical Sites and Procedures: A Mixed Methods Study Including Staff Perspectives on Mental Health Training and Support

Chair: Dr. Shala E. Davis

Tiffany Jordan's work focuses on improving health outcomes through the application of exercise as medicine across diverse clinical populations. She serves as a tenure-track faculty member in the ESU Exercise Science Department. In Tiffany's academic role, she has primarily taught undergraduate courses and recently began instructing graduate students in the Clinical Exercise Physiology program, where she also serves as clinical coordinator. Concurrently, Tiffany practices as a clinical exercise physiologist at Lehigh Valley Health Network–Jefferson, specializing in diagnostic stress testing and cardiac rehabilitation. Tiffany's research centers on exercise interventions in comorbidity populations, with additional experience in sports performance, nutrition, and exercise among collegiate athletes. Tiffany has contributed to the field through four published abstracts and multiple presentations at regional and national conferences through the American College of Sports Medicine. Outside of her professional work, Tiffany is a loving mother to Maverick and wife to Major Jordan.

Dissertation Abstract: Cardiovascular disease is the leading causing of death globally (CDC, 2024). After a cardiovascular event, cardiac rehabilitation (CR) is utilized to reduce the likelihood of secondary events and cardiac-related mortality, primarily focusing on physical restoration (Bellmann et al., 2020). Thus, the psychosocial aspects of mental health in CR and staff perceptions about their knowledge and comfort required further investigation. This study examined the effects of CR on depression and quality of life amongst post-cardiac surgery patients and assessed CR staff's knowledge, training, and comfort in addressing mental health topics.

A mixed-methods descriptive approach was utilized. Quantitative data was retrospectively extracted from electronic medical records (EMR) between January 1, 2022, to October 31, 2025. Inclusion criteria include adults (>18 years) who completed all 36 sessions of phase II CR following a qualifying procedure. Variables include initial-discharge PHQ-9 and Dartmouth COOP scores, demographics, surgical procedure details, comorbidities, and cardiac medications. Qualitative data was collected via a Qualtrics survey distributed to full-time CR staff using snowball sampling, and assessed staff perceptions, education, and confidence in addressing mental health within CR. Data collection at publication time of this program is in final stage. Findings will contribute to understanding of mental health in CR and inform strategies to enhance future research and policy on comprehensive CR care models.

Candidates for Doctoral Degrees

DOCTORATE OF HEALTH SCIENCES

**Mariam Juya**

B.S., East Stroudsburg University of Pennsylvania, 2017

M.S., Touro College of Osteopathic Medicine, 2024

Dissertation: Psychological Distress Among Afghan Refugees in an American Multi-City Approach: Examining the Impact of War Trauma, Post-Migration Stress, and Healthcare Access in a Mixed-Methods Study

Chair: Dr. Shala E. Davis

Mariam Juya served as a governor-appointed member of the University's Council of Trustees during her undergraduate years, while advocating for women's rights, global access to clean water, and environmental conservation. Following graduation, she served with AmeriCorps and conducted research at the University of Pittsburgh School of Medicine before earning her M.S. in Biological and Physical Sciences. She conducted doctoral research examining distress among refugees across resettlement sites, with attention to the historical and geopolitical forces shaping their experiences. Ms. Juya has contributed to clinical care, research, and advocacy across multiple countries. She worked at Chicago's largest refugee resettlement organization, serving newly arrived refugees and asylum seekers during a precarious moment for displaced people worldwide. A recipient of ESU's Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. Award and the C.Y. Cheng Endowed Scholarship for International Understanding, she is committed to human rights, educational equality, welfare for displaced communities, and civic engagement.

Dissertation Abstract: Across almost half a century of uninterrupted conflict and instability, 10.3 million Afghans remained forcibly displaced (USA for UNHCR, 2025). Despite this scale, war-related traumatic exposure, psychological distress, and post-migration stressors among Afghan refugees remained understudied and had not been measured concurrently in 2025, nearly five decades into continuous conflict, with cultural barriers to mental health treatment receiving particularly limited attention. This concurrent mixed-methods study examined war-related traumatic exposure, psychological distress, and post-migration living difficulties among Afghan refugees across three U.S. resettlement sites: Alexandria, Virginia; Chicago, Illinois; and Harrisburg, Pennsylvania. A total of 203 surveys were returned, yielding 161 participants with usable demographic data. Three culturally validated instruments were administered: the Afghan War Experiences Scale (AWES; $n = 135$), the Afghan Symptom Checklist (ASCL; $n = 140$), and the Post-Migration Living Difficulties Scale (PMLD; $n = 115$), each demonstrating excellent internal consistency ($\alpha = .937, .930$, and $.938$, respectively).

Participants reported measurable war-related traumatic exposure (AWES: $M = 27.73$, $SD = 9.42$), with Harrisburg participants reporting significantly higher exposure than Chicago participants, $F(2, 67.384) = 5.665$, $p = .005$. Psychological distress was present across the sample (ASCL: $M = 41.17$, $SD = 15.03$), with thinking too much, sadness, and sleep difficulties among the most endorsed symptoms. Post-migration living difficulties were similarly documented (PMLD: $M = 61.02$, $SD = 22.35$), with transnational family concerns, financial insecurity, and fears of deportation as the most prevalent stressors. War-related exposure, psychological distress, and post-migration difficulties operated as statistically independent dimensions. Findings carry implications for culturally responsive service delivery and refugee mental health policy.

Candidates for Doctoral Degrees

DOCTORATE OF HEALTH SCIENCES

**Kiley Taylor Koenig**

B.S., East Stroudsburg University of Pennsylvania, 2020

M.S., East Stroudsburg University of Pennsylvania, 2021

Dissertation: Efficacy of New Injectable Cholesterol Lowering Medications versus Statin Drugs in Treating Hyperlipidemia: A Retrospective Mixed Methods Analysis of Clinical Outcomes and Healthcare Provider Perceptions

Chair: Dr. Shala E. Davis

Kiley Koenig is a Clinical Exercise Physiologist at Crystal Run Healthcare with five years of experience in cardiac rehabilitation and stress testing. She is dedicated to improving cardiovascular outcomes through patient-centered care and the practical application of clinical research. In her role, she supports patients in enhancing functional capacity, reducing cardiovascular risk factors, and improving overall quality of life. Her research focuses on lipid management and emerging injectable cholesterol-lowering therapies, reflecting her commitment to evidence-based practice and innovation in cardiovascular care. Kiley is passionate about patient education and prevention strategies that promote long-term health. She aims to pursue a career in pharmaceutical research, contributing to the development of therapies that improve cardiovascular outcomes. In her free time, she enjoys reading, hiking, and spending time with friends and family.

Dissertation Abstract: Cardiovascular disease remains the leading cause of death worldwide, with elevated low-density lipoprotein cholesterol (LDL-C) identified as a major modifiable risk factor. This study examined the effectiveness of cholesterol-lowering therapies, comparing traditional statins with newer injectable drugs, including PCSK9 inhibitors. A retrospective mixed-methods design was used, analyzing 50 patient records to evaluate LDL-C reduction and conducting semi-structured interviews with healthcare providers to explore clinical decision-making.

Injectable therapies achieved a mean LDL-C reduction of 45.6%, exceeding the 39.5% reduction observed with statins. Use of injectable agents was associated with elevated lipoprotein(a), high atherosclerotic cardiovascular disease (ASCVD) risk scores, and significant coronary artery calcium scores. These results suggest that injectable therapies may offer superior LDL-C reduction, particularly for high-risk patients or those intolerant to statins. Provider perspectives emphasized the value of individualized treatment strategies that account for patient-specific risk factors, comorbidities, and tolerability. Overall, findings support integrating injectable lipid-lowering agents into personalized hyperlipidemia management to optimize cardiovascular risk reduction.

Candidates for Doctoral Degrees

DOCTORATE OF HEALTH SCIENCES

**Brittany Elizabeth Sheehy McCormick**

B.S., East Stroudsburg University of Pennsylvania, 2017

M.A., University of North Carolina at Greensboro, 2019

Dissertation: Emotional Regulation Therapy and Communication Outcomes in Traumatic Brain Injury: A Longitudinal Case Series

Chair: Dr. Rachel Wolf

Brittany McCormick, M.A. CCC-SLP is an ASHA certified speech language pathologist (SLP) who has been licensed to practice within Pennsylvania since 2020. Brittany has been an acute care SLP at Penn Medicine Doylestown Health for over five years specializing in tracheostomy, ventilator-dependent, and laryngectomy patients. Brittany has taught as an adjunct professor within the department of Speech, Language, and Hearing Sciences at East Stroudsburg University for the past two years. Her teaching philosophy focuses on evidence-based research, service learning, and clinical experience. Her research with the traumatic brain injured (TBI) population began while working on her master's degree at the University of North Carolina at Greensboro and clinical experience at the Durham Veteran's Medical Center. Her research is comprised of examining TBIs within the prison population, acquired apraxia of speech and aphasia within the veteran population, analysis of dialectal differences, and implementation of emotional regulation within speech therapy. Beyond her professional and academic pursuits, Brittany is the proud mother to three beautiful girls (Makenna: 4, Adelynne: 3, and Lorelai: 7 months), and wife to Ryan McCormick.

Dissertation Abstract: This study investigated the impact of including a supplemental emotional regulation regiment into speech therapy for TBI participants diagnosed with cognitive-linguistic and communicative deficits. Previous research on the impact of emotional regulation on communication outcomes is limited. Although, anecdotal testament has suggested positive implications for addressing emotional regulation along with traditional cognitive-linguistic therapeutic services. Knowledge in this area is imperative for enhancing diagnostic and therapeutic rehabilitation protocols, developing goals and improving prognoses. The aim of this study was to add evidence by investigating the impact supplemental weekly emotional regulation sessions had on TBI patients' cognitive-linguistic functioning, communication participation, and narrative discourse when paired with traditional prescribed speech therapy. It was hypothesized that the participants' cognitive-linguistic and communicative abilities would improve with the addition of emotional regulation therapeutic sessions.

During this six-week study which was conducted at Progressive Rehabilitation of Pennsylvania (a facility that specialized in therapeutic services for TBI patients), individuals were assigned to either an experimental group (i.e., cognitive-linguistic therapy and emotional regulation therapy) or a control group (i.e. cognitive-linguistic therapy). Their progress was measured with repeated administration of objective assessments and narrative samples prior, midway, and post-therapeutic plan. Through statistical (i.e. Systematic Analysis Language Transcript 24.0 and Statistical Package for the Social Sciences 29.0) and descriptive analyses, empirical findings were obtained. Results suggested that the addition of supplemental emotional regulation therapy held potential efficacy for improving communication participation, narrative discourse, and cognitive-linguistic functioning when paired with traditional prescribed speech therapy.

Candidates for Doctoral Degrees

DOCTORATE OF HEALTH SCIENCES

**Brigid Tray**

B.F.A., Pennsylvania Academy of Fine Arts, 2012

M.P.H., East Stroudsburg University of Pennsylvania, 2020

Dissertation: Influencing Factors on the Educational and Career Decisions of OB/GYNs in the United States

Chair: Dr. Clare Lenhart

Brigid Tray is a health educator and strategic wellness consultant for Jefferson Lehigh Valley, where she serves as the lead in the planning, implementation, and evaluation of health and wellness programs. Brigid holds a Master of Public Health degree with a focus in Community Health and is a Certified Health Education Specialist. She began her career as a certified Health and Wellness Coach, which has given her unique insight into understanding common barriers to health and wellness. Her background in public health and coaching has shaped her interest in how policy and the environment affect individual and population health outcomes. Brigid lives in Bethlehem. When not at work, you may find her on a hike with her husband, doing crafts with her mom, walking her dog, or escaping into a good book.

Dissertation Abstract: Access to maternal healthcare is a growing problem in the United States, with some regions and populations more likely to experience provider shortages and worsened health outcomes. Following the 2022 Dobbs decision, access to abortion training during OB/GYN residency has increased in variability, which may further compound challenges associated with limited access to maternal healthcare. This study used a socioecological framework to understand if changes in national abortion policy post-Dobbs affected OB/GYN choice of residency by assessing the importance of factors that influenced the educational and career choices between OB/GYNs who began residency before and after the 2022 Dobbs decision, and if quality of care concerns differed between the groups. OB/GYNs (n=56) completed a mixed methods questionnaire adapted from validated inventories. Two key informant interviews were conducted to provide a deeper context

Themes emerged supporting recent research suggesting the importance of abortion policy in the choice of residency, with results indicating the importance of reproductive advocacy, proximity to family, and access to family planning education. There were differences between groups, though no single factor reached statistical significance. Of the six care quality domains, confidence in the timeliness and efficiency of care was lowest, although there were no statistically significant differences between groups. The association between abortion policy and resident quality, diversity, and retention post-graduation should continue to be evaluated in the evolving context of provider shortages and care quality outcomes.

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Anand Noel Sewdya
B.S., East Stroudsburg University of Pennsylvania, 2025
Advisor: Dr. Chad Witmer

Lucas Skelley
B.S., East Stroudsburg University of Pennsylvania, 2024
Advisor: Dr. Chad Witmer

Benjamin Terry
B.S., East Stroudsburg University of Pennsylvania, 2024
Advisor: Dr. Chad Witmer

Health Education

Judith A. Garrigan
B.S., University of Delaware, 1989
Advisor: Dr. Kelly Boyd

Tiana Grace Savino
B.S., East Stroudsburg University of Pennsylvania, 2025
Advisor: Dr. Kelly Boyd

Shakera Shirkness
B.S., East Stroudsburg University of Pennsylvania, 2022
Advisor: Dr. Kelly Boyd

Jordyn Summer Thomas
B.S., West Chester University of Pennsylvania, 2011
Advisor: Dr. Kelly Boyd

*Please note that every attempt has been made to include all graduates' names in the Commencement program by the production deadline.
We apologize for any omissions or errors.*

Graduation is contingent upon completion of all requirements.

We are committed to ensuring that our Commencement ceremonies are accessible to all attendees. Closed captioning is available during the ceremony, both through the video board at Koehler Fieldhouse and the live stream at esu.edu/commencement/ceremony.cfm. This service is provided to ensure that everyone can fully participate and celebrate this important occasion. If you have any questions or require additional assistance, please contact a staff member at today's ceremony.

Thank you to all of the ESU staff and faculty who have contributed to this spring's commencement ceremonies.

Today's graduates are now ESU alumni!

Follow the ESU Alumni Association on Facebook at East Stroudsburg University Alumni Association and on Instagram @esualumni.

Recognition of Post-Baccalaureate Certification Students

East Stroudsburg University and Graduate and Extended Studies are pleased to recognize the following students who have completed coursework and submitted documentation for specific Pennsylvania Department of Education instructional, specialist, and supervisor certificates.

Biology 7-12

Stephen N. Botek
John R. Markle

Chemistry 7-12

Kathleen Lavelle

Early Childhood Education PK-4

Maria Kelly
Lindsay M. Lord
Madison R. Malay
Genesis O. Reyes
Stephanie Rocha

Educational Specialist I Instructional Technology Specialist PK-12

Devin H. Cetnar
Alexandra Zero

Educational Specialist I School Speech & Language Pathologist PK-12

Sofia Z. Abbas
Katrina D. Cravy
Mickayla L. Grow
Wendy G. Setzer

Endorsement Instructional I Coach PK-12

Amy F. Berman

Endorsement Online Instruction Program PK-12

Shaquila S. Castle
Jaime M. Heicklen
Gretchen Ragazzo
Susanna G. Silva
Kaila M. Slack

Experience-Based Chemistry 7-12

Jennifer J. Edwards

Experience-Based Early Childhood Education PK-4

Mackenzie W. Koslop

Experience-Based Earth & Space Science 7-12

Alyssa Simeone

Experience-Based English 7-12

Daryl A. Fanelli

Experience-Based Mathematics 7-12

Gwen C. Boonyam

Experience-Based Spanish PK-12

Jennifer Morales
Melissa Zapata

French PK-12

Tamara C. Etienne-Daniel
Zoe E. Spritzer

Grades 4-8 (All Subjects 4-6, English Language Arts & Reading 7-8)

Sarah J. Jones

Grades 4-8 (All Subjects 4-6, Math 7-8)

Patrick A. Bodnar

Grades 4-8 (All Subjects 4-6, Science 7-8)

Beth A. Green

Letter of Eligibility Superintendent PK-12

Amanda L. Hinkel
Jennifer L. Nonnemacher

Principal PK-12

Danielle J. Cloward
Alexis R. Decker
Christopher M. D'Emilio
Anays O. Fuertes
Marisa C. Jacobus
Tenika Kianes Brooks
Patrick J. McHale
Shane R. Schneider
Jerry Solano

Program Specialist English as a Second Language (ESL) PK-12

Stephanie M. Archer
Mary S. Bidwell
Cynthia A. Emeigh
Jessica I. Martin
Jessica M. Schuon

Reading Specialist PK-12

AngelaRae Davis
Jolene M. Lentowski
Brittany N. McGowan
Elinamarie Ramella
Megan Sirkot
Kimberly A. Skorski
Najah J. Spruill
Amanda E. Tomik

Social Studies 7-12

Benjamin A. Pembleton
Carlos A. Santiago
Ronald A. Syme

Spanish PK-12

Edna Cooney
Jennifer Morales
Melissa Zapata

Special Education PK-12

Niloofer P. Aflatooni
Lori A. Bray
Brittany N. Gardner
Kristyn E. Hayes
Jose Hernandez
Jacob A. Huff
Mackenzie A. McEvoy
Laurie Morgan
Jieh Xuan Pan
Maria de Los Angeles Santiago-Rodriguez
Amy L. Sikora
Veronica M. Taylor
Emily Zabriskie
Martina M. Zaragoza
Maureen J. Zigmont

Speech & Language Impaired PK-12

Caitlynn M. Leffler
Ariel Pollak
Cristina M. Ramos
Samantha J. Rex
Madison S. Root
Erica Tout
Norma Zavala

Supervisory Special Education PK-12

Kristen L. Braun
April E. Dadarwala
Elizabeth C. Guaragno
Jamie L. Miller
Dana Alyse D. Schaffer
Rebecca B. Young

Graduate Scholarships for 2025-26

DR. ELI BERMAN ENDOWED SCHOLARSHIP I & II

Recipient: Tyler McGarvey

Dr. Eli Berman is a retired ESU professor of exercise science. He spent a large part of his career as a cardiologist and internal medicine specialist in practice with Medical Associates of Monroe County in East Stroudsburg, Pennsylvania. This scholarship is awarded to two clinical exercise physiology students each spring.

DR. JEFFREY and MRS. AUDREY WEBER ENDOWED SCHOLARSHIP

Recipient: Emilie H. Protsko

Established in the names of Dr. Jeffrey and Mrs. Audrey Weber, recipients must be enrolled in either the Political Science or History Master's Degree Program. The award will alternate between these two majors. Selected by the ESU Scholarship Committee.

DR. LEROY J. KOEHLER GRADUATE STUDENT SCHOLARSHIP

Recipient: Molly Minor

Leroy J. Koehler was a long-time member of the Social Studies faculty at East Stroudsburg State Teachers College. He served as President of the College from 1956 to 1968, during which time the institution's name was changed to East Stroudsburg State College. The scholarship is awarded each spring for the following academic year. This year's recipient is a graduate student in the sport management program.

GEORGE D. '58 and HARRIET D. '56 HALL GRADUATE ENDOWED AND ANNUAL SCHOLARSHIP

Recipient: Emma A. Granholm

George D. Hall is an alumnus, Class of 1958 and his wife, Harriet Davis Hall is an alumna, Class of 1956. They met and married while attending East Stroudsburg State Teachers College and went on to careers in teaching. The Halls ultimately retired from the education faculty at Western Connecticut State University and currently reside in Sun City Center, Florida. The scholarship is awarded each fall for the following spring semester. Recipients must hold a baccalaureate degree with certification in elementary education and currently be pursuing a master's degree in elementary education.

JAMES C. RUTHERFORD, JR. '09 BIOLOGY GRADUATE ENDOWED SCHOLARSHIP

Recipient: Peter Kaires

The scholarship was established by James and Lael Rutherford in memory of their son, James C. Rutherford, Jr., Class of 2009. Recipients are selected by the East Stroudsburg University Biology Department Scholarship Committee. Preference is given to students who are working on their thesis or research project. Recipients are highly encouraged to present their findings at a biological conference. The scholarship is awarded to a biology graduate student each academic year.

MARY SUE '60 M'69 and LOUIS BALDUCCI ENDOWED SCHOLARSHIP

Recipient: Anna M. Coulter

The scholarship was established by Dr. Mary Sue and Louis Balducci. Dr. Balducci received her undergraduate degree from East Stroudsburg University of Pennsylvania in 1960 and her Master's Degree from East Stroudsburg University of Pennsylvania in 1969. Recipients are selected by the Graduate Advisory Council Scholarship Committee. Applicants must be enrolled as a graduate student in the Exercise Science or Sports Management programs and must have a minimum of six credits earned at East Stroudsburg University of Pennsylvania with two years of work experience in a related field. Applicants must submit an academic resume of their achievements throughout their college career. Preference is given to students not in the graduate assistantship program and whose academic resume is accompanied by a letter of recommendation by an East Stroudsburg University of Pennsylvania faculty or staff member.

RYAN J. YANOSHAK M'05 ANNUAL SCHOLARSHIP

Recipient: Andre Allison

Established in memory of Ryan J. Yanoshak M'05, recipients must be graduate students majoring in Sport Management. Preference will be given to graduate students interning in the ESU Sports Information Department. If there is no intern for Sports Information the award will be made to a worthy graduate student majoring in Sport Management who has demonstrated an interest in sports, media or sports management. The scholarship is renewable as long as funding is available and the recipient continues to meet the criteria. Selected by the ESU Sport Management Department Scholarship Committee.

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The Alma Mater

Alma Mater, thy halls so majestically stand
In the midst of a landscape unique,
Through the seasons we toil with our bodies and minds
In pursuit of the wisdom we seek.
A mystical charm binds thy children to thee,
Each incoming class feels its spell;
Those who leave thee regretful thy beauties recall,
Which deep in their memories dwell.

(Patrick Conny, 1912)

A photographer from GradImages is present at today's ceremony. Each graduate is photographed as they cross the stage.

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East Stroudsburg University of Pennsylvania is committed to equal opportunity for its students, employees and applicants. The university is committed to providing equal educational and employment rights to all persons without regard to race, color, sex, religion, national origin, age, disability, sexual orientation, gender identity or veteran's status. Each member of the university community has a right to study and work in an environment free from any form of racial, ethnic and sexual discrimination including sexual harassment, sexual violence and sexual assault. (Further information, including contact information, can be found on the university's website at esu.edu/titleix.) In accordance with federal and state laws, the university will not tolerate discrimination.

This policy is placed in this document in accordance with state and federal laws including Titles VI and VII of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, Title IX of the Educational Amendments of 1972, Sections 503 and 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990, and the Civil Rights Act of 1991 as well as all applicable federal and state executive orders.

